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"The truth,
the whole truth,
and nothing
but the truth
. . . without fear
or favor"

Conde McGinley
1890 • FOUNDER • 1968

"URBAN RENEWAL" IN USA PLAN TO LEGALIZE LARCENY

By BLUFORD H. J. BALTER

Let us give thanks that urban renewal, urban redevelopment, urban revitalization, or any name under which it travels, through the abuse of eminent domain, has been unsuccessful in its attempts to invade the State of Louisiana. Let us give thanks that we, in Louisiana, are a beacon and a source of encouragement to other communities in the United States who have opposed this vicious land grab scheme.

Is the fight over? The answer to this is "no." Already, the do gooders and the crass materialists, in an unwholesome combination, have already commenced their preparation for their onslaught in the coming 1966 Louisiana Legislature.

In The Times Picayune, October 6, 1965, appears a full page ad painting a glorious picture of what New Orleans could look like if it embraced the wonderful benefits of urban redevelopment.

An examination of the proposal contained on that page reveals it to be nothing more than a very clever, cynical scheme to gain control of some of the most valuable real estate in the City of New Orleans and place it in the hands of a few.

But oh! What beautiful icing they have placed on the cake. We are told in the article that if we embrace this scheme that it shall be the cure for all of the social, economic and possibly even physical ills that beset the Citizens of New Orleans.

Baton Rouge, sister City of New Orleans on the Mississippi River, has likewise been subjected to the onslaught of the starry-eye do gooder and the crass, materialistic money grubber. In the 1960 Session House Bill 1338 proposed to amend the Constitution of Louisiana to permit the formation of a Baton Rouge downtown improvement district.

Baton Rouge, like many cities in the United States went through a period in the late 1950s and early 1960s of a developmental stagnation in the heart of the business district. The advocates of urban renewal and its many varieties of cousins, tried to use this distressful situation to panic people in Baton Rouge into adopting these schemes.

Happily, Baton Rouge central business district is on the march with the recent announcement of a multi-story office building to go up right in the heart of the business district. This office building will be financed entirely from private capital and this is as it should be.

House Bill 1338 would have created a downtown improvement district which would have had the power of eminent domain, the power to sue and be sued, to issue bonds on the public credit, levy special assessments to fund the bonds and could have taken the property away from the property owners in the business district and converted it into any kind of business operation which it wanted to do. The improvement district could have entered the drug store business, the department store business, possibly even the hotel, restaurant and parking garage business. This Bill was defeated in the Legislature.

The opposition to it came not only from Baton Rouge, but also from many people in New Orleans and among the vocal opponents were Representatives of the Parking Garage Industry.

In 1964, House Bill 1214, which did not pin point Baton Rouge, would have created authority in the Constitution for the creation of municipal service districts. The municipal service districts would have been able to sell bonds on the public credit, sue and be sued, increase ad valorem tax without limit and would have had the power of eminent domain. Those municipal service districts could have taken property away from private owners and could have done anything they wanted to do with the property.

Like House Bill 1338, House Bill 1214 provided a procedure for opposition to be raised; but in order for one to invoke the procedures of opposition reminds one of trying to learn how to do a complicated ballet dance. As a practical matter, the vast majority of property owners would have been unaware of their rights because of the obscurity of the language contained in the authority creating the districts.

Finally, each one of these districts provided that private property taken away from private individuals by eminent domain could then be sold to other private individuals.

House Bill 1214 did pass through the Legislature and became Act 559 of 1964, but was rejected by the people of Louisiana in a referendum, 218,172 votes against and 152,654 votes for.

Why do politicians interest themselves in these nefarious schemes? What benefit can

possibly result to a politician, who lives by the votes of the public, to tread such a dangerous tight rope as supporting these vicious land grab schemes?

Perhaps Drew Pearson had the answer when, in his column of Friday, September 3, 1965, in the New Orleans States-Item he discussed the abuse of urban redevelopment in the Chavez Ravine Project in Los Angeles as a direct contributing factor to the recent Los Angeles riots.

In the Chavez Ravine, 3300 ill-housed families were kicked out of their homes on the excuse to put up a new, modern public housing project.

Subsequently, the land was sold to the one-time Brooklyn Dodgers to make a baseball park and these 3300 families went to swell the already overcrowded area of Watts.

Drew Pearson goes on to state that "someone high up Los Angeles Real Estate circles presented 'gifts' of \$57,570.00 to . . ." a City Councilman to switch his vote against the public housing project and in favor of the Dodgers Baseball Team.

Upon the death of the City Councilman in question, enormous sums of cash were found in his safety deposit box in the bank and the only explanation which his survivors could give was that they were "gifts of money" to the late Commissioner by friends.

In an article in The Times Picayune of July 10, 1964, Russell Kirk stated the basic premise that urban renewal can result in a fiasco. Urban renewal has resulted in a fiasco in practically every community in which it has been utilized because it has not gone to

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LBJ RULES AS ELECTED MONARCH CONGRESS AND STATES ABDICATE TO WHITE HOUSE

The Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965 was passed by Congress August 16th, with only scant notice in the press. Any statute so completely destructive of the checks and balances in our government should have received nationwide analysis and debate. The following was written by the publisher, who is a lawyer, after careful examination of the federal statute and two related California statutes.

By WILLIAM HOCKER DRAKE

Freedom Press, Los Angeles, Calif.

In the name of economic opportunity and humanitarianism, Congress has given the President a collar and leash for every local area in the United States. It did so by passing the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965.

The provisions of this act can make the Executive Department into the biggest investor, banker and landlord in the United States, holding a government-directed empire beyond Congressional restraint. The directors of this empire would have coercive power to turn proud, independent citizens into vassals and State and local gov-

ernments into administrative flunkies.

All that remains to be done to start the process is for local citizens to fasten the collar around their own necks and for the Chief Executive to grasp the leash. This figure of speech refers to the requirement in the Economic Development Act that local governments elect to participate and that the Executive Department declare the area to be a redevelopment area.

Considering the widespread addiction to "federal money" for local affairs and the occupational disease of Presidents — a lust for more power — this act threatens to bring about the placement of the President's economic commissioners in every business area of the Nation.

With most businesses and jobs becoming dependent upon his favor, the commissar, who is called a "federal co-chairman," would constitute a supervisory line of authority from the President to the local area and make a mockery of every check and balance provided by our federal and State constitutions.

To establish this empire, the President's

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